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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet on conducting workshops and institutes is the ninth of 16 in a series to provide leaders in adult activities with sound introductory material to give practical help in using a method of adult education or working in a particular area. Its objective is to help leaders who conduct workshops or institutes to increase their skills and insight. Ten articles and how-tos are included. "Human Values in the Workshop Method" discusses what is compatible between the method and the nature of human beings. Several essential points in the preparation of the participant for an institute or workshop are illustrated in "Planning for Participation." "The Workshop Training Process" describes 11 steps in training workshop participants and suggests ways the workshop leader can help the participants take these steps. "That Crucial First Session" discusses group rapport and presents suggestions to meet individual needs. Using small work groups at conferences is the focus of "Organizing Work Groups;" "Using Resource People" looks at whom to use and when. The next article presents eight "Points for Participants." "Learning Through Play" spells out some devices for social experience in workshops and suggests a rationale for their contribution. Specific suggestions for maximizing application are offered in "Back Home Application." The final article, "Evaluation," discusses sensible assessment methods for workshops and institutes. (YLB)

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Leadership Pamphlet #9

A practical aid to leaders in education, government, welfare, health, farm, labor, religion, industry, and the community . . .

CONDUCTING WORKSHOPS AND INSTITUTES

Step-by-step help on every phase of the workshop method

- pre-planning
- getting started
- using resource people
- learning through play
- back-home application
- evaluation

Adult Education Association of the U.S.A.

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INTRODUCING THE AEA

The AEA (Adult Education Association of the United States of America) is a non-profit organization founded in May, 1951, as an instrument for developing a united adult education movement. The general purposes of AEA, as stated in its Constitution, are:

—"To further the concept of adult education as a process continuing throughout life.

—"To promote and develop adult education in the United States by affording opportunities to professional and non-professional adult educators to increase their competence and by encouraging and assisting organizations and agencies . . . to develop adult education activities and to work together in the interests of adult education.

—"To receive and disseminate information about adult education.

—"To promote the balanced development of educational services for adult persons in the United States.

—"To cooperate with adult education agencies internationally."

United in the AEA to further these purposes through a program including field services, conferences, publications, and public relations, are over 12,000 men and women who work with adults in formal and informal educational and training programs. These leaders represent every sector of American society—education, labor, agriculture, industry, religion, social welfare, government service, and a host of voluntary associations.

Adult Education Association of the U.S.A.
810 Eighteenth Street, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20006

Leadership Pamphlets are prepared and distributed by the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. Each pamphlet provides leaders in adult activities with sound introductory material which can give practical help in using an important method of adult education or working in a particular area with insight and skill.

Pamphlets in this series are:

P1 —How to Lead Discussions
P2 —Planning Better Programs
P3 —Taking Action in the Community
P4 —Understanding How Groups Work
P5 —How to Teach Adults
P6 —How to Use Role Playing
P7 —Supervision and Consultation
P8 —Training Group Leaders
P9 —Conducting Workshops and Institutes
P10—Working with Volunteers
P11—Conferences that Work
P12—Getting and Keeping Members
P13—Effective Public Relations
P14—Better Boards and Committees
P15—Streamlining Parliamentary Procedure
P16—Training in Human Relations

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We cannot teach except as we help others find their own inner freedom and will to learn. The workshop is an evolving invention designed to provide this kind of stage for learning—an exciting experience for leader and learner alike.

INTRODUCTION

First, let's agree on terms. Here is how "workshop" and "institute" have been used in this pamphlet:

WORKSHOP: A series of meetings, usually four or more two-hour sessions, that puts emphasis on individualized study within a group and with consulting teachers. Individual needs are the basis for choosing the problem to be solved. The significance of this method is that the individual student solves his own problems with the help of the group and the instructor, and leaves the workshop with a plan of action that he believes will fit his given situation.

INSTITUTE: A training meeting, usually one to three days in length. New material is presented to the participants either to provide information or stimulate study and action, or a combination of both.

Workshops and institutes are two of the most frequently used forms of organized adult learning. Tailored to weekends and vacation periods, they are admirably adapted to the requirements of many types of adult education and training. Whereas the once-a-week evening class spreads the learning experience over long periods of time and dilutes it with the responsibilities and distractions of everyday life, the workshop or institute concentrates the learning within a limited, continuous period and provides an uninterrupted "learning environment" from the beginning to the end of the curriculum.

Many of the advantages of this type of intensive learning situation are being cashed in on daily for training teachers, industrial employees, agency staff members,

voluntary workers in hosts of organized activities, and for education in various subject matters. We said "many of the advantages", not all of them. Workshops and institutes are not easy to conduct. There is a shortage of leaders skilled in planning, organizing, and operating them. The best practices have not been shared as widely as they might be.

The purpose of the articles in the following pages is to help those who conduct workshops or institutes to increase the skill and insight with which they approach their work, and to enable those of us who haven't yet experimented with this type of program to ready ourselves to do so. There is a great deal here, also, for all of us who are teachers and leaders—or from time to time learners—in any kind of educational program. For most of the principles and practices involved in leading, teaching, and learning effectively in workshops are applicable, with appropriate modifications, to other situations—to conferences, for example, and to the meetings of any continuing class or group.

In starting out, we should like to say that—like all LEADERSHIP PAMPHLETS—this pamphlet on workshops and institutes isn't exhaustive, either in the way topics are covered, or in the selection of topics. Important aspects of the workshop method, are treated in other pamphlets in this series, which are listed on the inside front cover.

HUMAN VALUES IN THE WORKSHOP METHOD

The workshop method of operation, which has become so popular wherever people assemble, must have in it an answer to some human needs. This is evident from the very fact that it *has* become popular. It is proposed here to discuss what is compatible between the method and the nature of human beings. What does this method do which meets human needs? What is it about humans that causes them to respond to this type of operation? What are the human values involved in it? How then does the workshop technique create an atmosphere that develops better human relations?

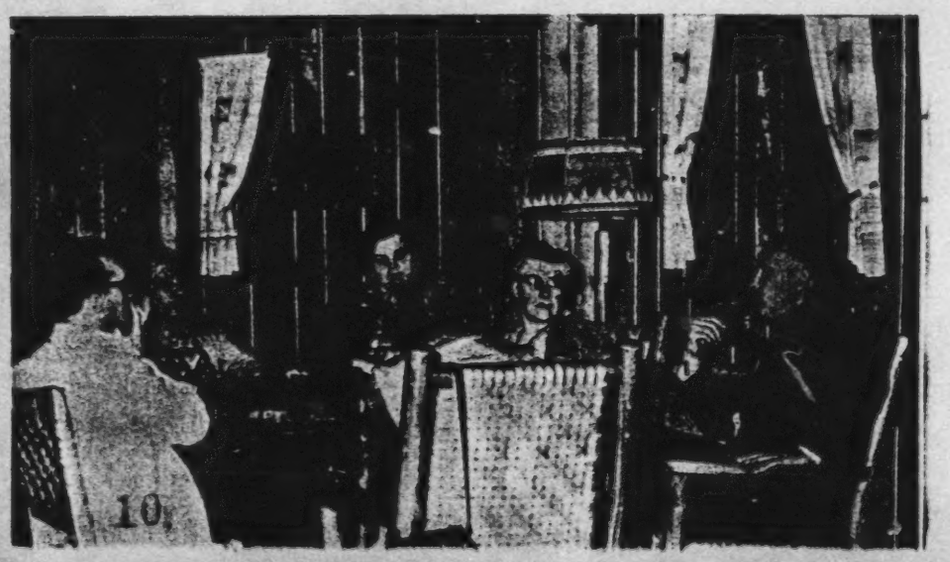
what is a workshop?

By way of definition and over-simplification, a workshop is any meeting of people where (1) they work together in small groups and (2) what is worked on is derived from the people who are present. The reason for the small group is that it will give everybody present an opportunity to participate—not just to listen, but to contribute. The small group has no magic power in itself, but it is the only situation where all can take part. The reason for deriving what is to be learned from the learners is that by that method, people have an oppor-

tunity to work in accordance with their unique purposes —to do something which "makes sense" to them.

Until quite recently, whenever people got together to learn, whether it was a class in school or a convention, it was thought that someone had to make up his mind in advance what was to be learned, and then teach it to those assembled, by book or by lecture. The people who came to learn had nothing to say about what was learned. They took what was offered them, or nothing. Often they took nothing, and the teacher-lecturer never knew it. They were automatically cast in a situation of isolation from each other. William H. Kilpatrick put it this way in a quote in *The Philosophy of Education*, "A lecturer is one who talks in someone else's sleep," and not all sleepers have their eyes closed.

Along in the thirties it occurred to someone to ask the learners what their concerns were, and to hold meetings based on these concerns. This seems simple and obvious now, but it took the human race a long time to think of it. People must have been pretty sick of the meetings where they were treated as empty containers to be filled with the stuff others chose for them. The workshop type of meeting became popular very quickly, and now we see almost any meeting advertised as a workshop. There seems to be a notion abroad that just to change the name of a gathering from "meeting" to



"workshop" will increase attendance.

Most of the "workshops" thus advertised are not workshops in the sense that they are being discussed here, because they do not meet the two criteria already stated. People who are responsible for planning such gatherings often lack faith in the ability of people to work on their own problems, and so they do the planning after all. This basic lack of faith in other people is the authoritarian concept which is blocking the development of better human relations everywhere. In fact, an enormous number of evils stem from this lack of faith.

We who are working in the field of in-service teacher training in Michigan have made great use of the workshop technique. For a good many years we have been gathering teachers together, preferably at a lake campsite.

rather than in a city. What problems are to be studied are set up *after* the teachers get there, by the people who are going to study.

people become more adequate

We have had enormous success in bringing about changes in people. Many of those who attend these conferences are modified so that they behave differently. We have seen people become more adequate in their relations with others, a change leading to better human relations. As they work together they grow in their faith in others. This makes it possible for them to relinquish their authoritarian roles, and begin to operate more democratically. This also makes it possible for them to cherish people who are different from themselves, and to let go of unreasoned prejudices which were implanted in them very early in their culture. We see them become more outgoing, more friendly, more optimistic. And, from the immediately practical point of view, we see teachers modify their teaching methods in the direction of being more human in their relationships with their children.

It is not possible to reduce changes in attitude to percentages, and set them forth in tables. Not being able to do this makes some people unhappy. I believe that we will never be able to evaluate these human changes statistically. But we can tell a sweet teacher from a sour one, and we can detect the difference when one turns from sour to sweet. We wouldn't believe it if we saw it only in a table anyway.

There are several factors involved in the workshop situation, as contrasted to the listening situation, which tend to modify those who take part, and account for the changes we have observed in them. There will be space here for discussing only two of these factors.

an active role for the learner

The first of these is that the workshop setting casts learners in an active, rather than a passive role. When the learner is placed in a small group for the purpose of studying some problem of his own choice, he is required by the setting to *do* something. He will, at the least, be asked to tell what he knows about the problem under consideration. The responsibility has been shifted

from the teacher-lecturer to the learner. He comes to realize that it is *his* learning that is at stake, and that if he does not do anything, nothing will happen.

Thus, by being cast in a situation where he must do something about his own dilemma, he comes into an experience. "We learn by doing" has become an accepted cliché, about which very little is done. The phrase means that the organism is modified by experience, and only modified organisms behave differently. The payoff is in behavior. No teaching or learning has any significance unless the learner at some time and under certain circumstances behaves differently than he would have had he not undergone the experience and the modification.

We have observed many examples of the necessity of experience in learning from workshop members who are deeply prejudiced against Negroes. This feeling is so deeply embedded in these people that I am convinced that no change in this regard can be secured through purely intellectual efforts. They read the fine books on the subject, listen to scientific evidence, and accept on an intellectual level. But they are not really changed until they have genuine experience with those whose skins happen to be different from their own. In our workshop conferences prejudiced whites and prejudiced Negroes work together, eat together, live in dormitories together, dance together. We have much testimony to the fact that then, and only then, do their basic attitudes toward each other change.

It is not here contended that when one listens to a lecture, for example, he is not doing anything. As long as he really listens, he is having a low-order experience. It is low-order because a very small part of the total organism is involved, and since no responsibility for what is going on is assumed, it is too easy for the learner to stop listening without anyone knowing the difference. Listening is also rendered ineffective by the fact that the lecturer has no way of knowing whether his words can have meaning for any particular listener.

Switching the role of the learner from a passive listening one to an active doing one is a major operation. The new active role is not always entered into happily. Some people come to meetings determined that someone else shall carry the ball. They are the ones who say that they get the most out of a good lecture by someone

who really knows something, or those who ask, "Can't I participate by just being a good listener?" As a rule, those who resist the switch in roles come to enjoy the active one.

humans must have other humans

The second factor in the workshop operation to be discussed is that in this method, to a degree, we meet the social need, which is felt by every human being. Humans must have other humans. This is not just a minor need, but an absolute necessity. No human being ever grew into anything we would consider remotely human without others. John Dewey, writing to me on December 25, 1952, said:

"The point I have in mind may be indicated best, perhaps, by your phrase *if* an individual needs others. I can't see any if about it. One's need of others are plain necessities. Connection of need and necessity is more than ethnological. The human being is born a helpless infant and in many cases he can't even start breathing on his own without a friendly smack. He certainly needs others for supplying food and drink without which even physical existence wouldn't occur. An *in*fant (non-speaker) he needs communication with others for language, without which mind is a mere sound signifying nothing, and these needs are imperative for development even as an animal to say nothing of as a human being."

We see many people in our authoritarian competitive culture trying to go it alone, and becoming less human the further they go. We also see lonely people greatly relieved when they are cast in a situation where other humans can be accepted by them.

We now have clear and complete evidence that the social need, the need of each individual of a species for its own kind, is not just a human trait, but is present in all living creatures. Those who deny it do so in contradiction of a requirement that is older than man himself.

The scientific basis for the social need can be seen also by our recent better understanding of the phenomenon of perception. We are indebted to Professor Adelbert Ames, Jr. of the Institute for Associated Research, Hanover, New Hampshire, for these new understandings. Through these studies we can see that man builds and

is built by his environment. The most important part of one's environment is other people. So the individual has an enormous stake in the quality of other people, since they are what he feeds upon. When we change the role of the learner from one of isolation from others to one of operating with others, perhaps the most basic and fundamental change is that we have supplied the learner with other people, which he so sorely needs. In many instances, we have seen socially lonely and hungry people grasp the opportunity to "take in" other people with great avidity.

Not only is the learner given an opportunity to assuage his hunger for others, but he also has a chance to learn how to operate with other people, to sharpen his skill at relatedness. For the techniques of relatedness have to be learned, just as other skills and competencies do. The person who operates in isolation, or has been obliged to because of the setting in which he has been cast, does not know how to operate with others, and often drives others away from himself by his clumsiness and lack of skill.

Relatedness is essential for survival. This has always been so, but it is more apparent in our contemporary society than ever before. It is true that hermits have gone off by themselves and survived in a physical sense, for a time. They have not grown in the direction of adequacy, and doubtless have caught themselves talking to the chipmunks. These are isolated cases. The rest of us have to have other people to do anything at all.

I have been told that it takes 120 people to make a pair of nylon hose, and that no one of the 120 can make one alone. How many does it take for a suit of clothes, or to provide the merchandise for a super-market? What do I have that I could have made myself? And if I did make it, how crude would it be, and how soon would I be seeking the products made with the help of others?

Because we are unique, we have the capacity to specialize, and particularly in recent times we have become highly specialized. Since we become effective in small areas only, we need other specialists in order to survive. The more we specialize, the more dependent we become on each other—the more we must cooperate. For a specialist (and who is not?) to declare himself

independent of his fellowmen is literally to commit suicide.

relatedness—a tool for survival

Since skill in relatedness is a matter of survival, any educational setting which provides a chance to learn such skills is better than one which does not. This raises the question as to what is fundamental. One usually hears that of course the so-called 3 R's are the fundamentals. But not one of them is essential to survival, and for that matter only one of them starts with R. The fundamentals are those things without which one could not get along. It seems to me that the first R then is relatedness.

This is directly contrary to our present acquisitive concept of education. In this concept, so common in our schools, knowledge is something one acquires by himself, in isolation from others. This denies the learner the opportunity to learn any of the skills of relating himself to others. He is often asked to sign an oath that he has neither given or received help from another! The worst sin is to have related himself to someone else!

The workshop is one place, and there are not many in our culture, where people are taught the fundamental tool subject of relatedness. That is why the workshop technique is so essential in human relations. It is a place where people can do something for themselves instead of having something done to them. It is a place where people can assuage the basic loneliness which comes from uniqueness and cultural isolation. These opportunities are at the heart of improved human understanding.

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PLANNING FOR PARTICIPATION

Bill Jones received a letter from the local Health Council asking him to participate in an institute on "Meeting the Health Needs in Our Community". Someone in the local health department knew that he had been a volunteer first-aid instructor in the Civilian Defense school last year. They knew also that he had taken an active interest in his Neighborhood Improvement Club. They thought he would be interested and would have something to contribute to the meeting of this Health Council institute.

Bill accepted the invitation, and Jim Carroll called him within the week, asking if he did not want to meet with a group of the prospective members and help the Institute Committee do some planning. Bill had supposed that there was usually someone behind the scenes who made all the arrangements for such meetings, but he was willing to devote some of his time to the project, and he went to the pre-planning meeting.

At the meeting it became clear that the planners were eager to get the Institute down to brass tacks on some specific health problems which faced the community. What were these problems? How could they be determined?

Bill found himself taking an active part in finding out what people thought the important health problems were. Those two Saturdays were no longer dates circled

on his calendar for future reference. They became landmarks toward which he was working.

After the planning meeting, he found himself taking on the task of interviewing four of the prospective committee members concerning their expectations for the meeting, and finding out what they considered important items to be studied on the busy agenda for those two days. Bill lacked experience in interviewing people, and he tackled the first one with some anxiety. But it turned out well. He found that the principal of the Hardy Elementary School had a lot of ideas and that she was happy to know that the problems she thought important were being given consideration.

Dale Jackson, the neighborhood chairman of the Elmwood district Boy Scouts, he knew very well; Mr. Jackson not only had some ideas, but suggested someone in the community who was very much interested and had a lot of facts about attitudes toward health problems which he thought should be available to the committee. George Carter, an insurance agent, had indicated willingness to attend, but was pretty lukewarm about it all. So many meetings, he said, dealt in windy generalities; however, he was encouraged by learning that some real problems were going to be worked on.

At the final planning meeting before the Institute was held, Bill found that other interviewers had experienced the same kind of enthusiasm as he had. Enthusiasm came both from the experience of talking over in an informal way what the Institute would be doing, and from giving participants a chance to build the actual agenda. As Bill listened to other members of the pre-planning committee, it became clear that his experience was multiplied many times. The accounts of the interviewers contributed a pool of live problems on which the meeting could focus.

Bill found himself exploring ways of organizing the sessions so that groups could think profitably together on the issues raised. Toward the end of the meeting he became troubled about one question: everything looked good for a profitable meeting to all those who were involved in the planning, but what about the others who were not on the pre-planning committee? Did they know anything about how the Institute was to be run? Would they expect to take part right off in the basic discussion

groups? Or would they sit back and wait for the team of consultants to give them the *right* answers? Wasn't this the way most meetings were run? How could participants be told that this meeting was to be different? Wouldn't this make a difference in their own attitudes toward work in the meeting?

The questions raised by Bill convinced the committee it should try to spell out the procedures for the meeting. It took them some time, but they prepared a short brochure which indicated the problem areas and the way in which the Institute was to be organized and run, and gave a little of the philosophy behind the plan. The brochure described the learning process at the Institute as one calling for full participation, for the sharing of ideas and experiences, and for the intelligent use of resources. It also indicated what the role of an effective learner should be. Such an orientation, it seemed to Bill, would provide most members with a psychological preparation for getting the most out of the Institute.

The story of Bill Jones illustrates several essential points in the preparation of the participant for an institute or workshop.

First, it shows the value of involving prospective members in the pre-planning activities.

Second, it shows the desirability of attempting to get information about specific and concrete problems from the participants. Bill's committee did this by interviewing as many of the Institute members as possible. It might also have been done by questionnaires. Or it might have been done by getting together some small neighborhood "locals" for consideration of problems and suggestions for the larger group.

Third, the expectation of the delegates may be a crucial factor in the success or failure of an institute or workshop. We know that it is a basic concept in psychology that a person's mental set influences him to see things in terms of this set. If he has been a passive listener in previous workshops or institutes, then he may feel uncomfortable if he is plunged suddenly into full and active participation by the demands of the group. Knowing as much as possible about what is going to take place often helps a person help it to take place. In this case, Bill's concern about the participants' expectations was the factor that caused the brochure to be circulated.

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THE WORKSHOP TRAINING PROCESS

Workshops and institutes, regardless of their subject-matter, are usually devoted to training their participants to do some job better, whether it be teaching English to adults, leading a community council, or supervising a production line.

Improving performance is, therefore, a common goal for all participants in workshops and institutes. Listed below are 11 steps in the process of training workshop participants (who are referred to as "leaders-in-training"). The first column describes the steps and the second column suggests ways the workshop leader can help participants take these steps.

PHASE I—*GETTING READY TO CHANGE*

1. Develop an atmosphere in which people feel free to discuss and express their problems of leading, their needs to change, their feelings of difficulty, the places where they need help.	Listen sympathetically to the ideas, suggestions, and feelings of all members. Play down status distinctions among members and between leader and members. Assume all members have a part to play in defining the aims of training. Try to make participation easy for every member.
2. Develop a sense of shared interests and problems and a climate of mutual respect and understanding among members in which each is willing to help and be helped by the others.	Help all members to understand and appreciate the contributions of each. Offer opportunities for every member to help and be helped by other members (organize sub-groups, etc.) Encourage group activities outside of training (meals, social events, etc.) Try to show common elements in the leadership experience and problems of different members. Stress that the training goals are the members', not the leader's.

3. Develop an expectation that all leaders-in-training (and the training-leader too) will change during their experience together.	Tell about other successful projects in leadership training. Assume that change is possible and desirable for every member. Accept members' fears of change as natural. (See p. 14) Encourage members to share in planning. Try to set realistic limits to what members expect to learn from their experience. Suggest relatively easy first steps to insure a success experience. (See p. 14)
4. Adapt the training program to meet the needs and interests of all members in this particular group.	Build training agenda out of the expressed needs, interests and problems of members. Encourage members to test ideas expressed in terms of their own experience. Use examples of leadership situations similar to those of members. Set up a steering committee in which members can take part in determining what to do next. Give members an opportunity to react anonymously to each training session and suggest improvements.
5. Develop a problem-solving orientation toward difficulties of leadership.	Encourage members to state and look at their problems objectively. Avoid identifying problems with persons. Encourage group to identify common elements in their individual problems. Encourage group to analyze and define their problems. Discourage members from looking for ready-made and over-simple answers. Assume that group can fully test ideas expressed only as they try them out and evaluate the results.

PHASE II—*MAKING THE CHANGE*

6. Clarify the training goals —what members hope to accomplish through study, discussion and practice.	Involve members in defining goals. Try to be sensitive to feelings of confusion and to help group clarify confusions. Encourage expectation that goals will change as the training experience develops. Discourage efforts to freeze goals at the beginning of training.
7. Understand why leaders-in-training have been performing as they have been, the factors that make them want to change and those that make it hard for them to change.	Help members answer: How have we been performing as leaders? Why do we want to change? What keeps us from changing? How can we change? Discuss usual psychological resistances and supports to change. (See p. 15) Discuss usual institutional or organizational factors for and against change. (See p. 15)

A. Understand *internal* forces for and against change. B. Understand *external* forces for and against change.	Discuss community resistances and supports operating in the typical leadership situation. (See p. 15) Help members apply psychological, institutional and community understandings to their own leadership situations. Use your own behavior as training-leader as an example for discussion and analysis of leadership problems. Ask for periodic group evaluations of group and member experiences.
8. Modify forces that will permit leaders-in-training to perform in an improved manner. A. Decide what changes we can make here and now. B. Plan what changes need to be made back home.	Help members pick out relevant psychological, institutional and community factors that can be modified most easily. Help members select things that can be worked on in the training sessions and those that will have to be modified later. Help members to determine a sequence of changed practice that will cause least disruption in their home settings.
9. Acquire and practice new skills which analysis of the leadership situation shows are most needed.	Set up opportunities, through role playing, for practice. Provide for practice in a setting where initial failure or imperfect performance is not too disturbing. Encourage helpful criticism by group of each member's practice attempts. Help group plan collection of data for evaluating practice experiments (use member observers, etc.).

PHASE III—*TRANSFERRING CHANGES BACK-HOME*

10. Relate training to the actual situations in which the members will use it.	Use situations for training that seem real to the members. Help members generalize principles from their training experiences. Encourage testing of principles developed in training against the realities of the home leadership situations of members.
11. Provide continued reenforcement and help in applying what has been learned in training to the job situation.	Encourage members to continue working as teams after training to help each other on leadership problems as they come up. Help members plan ways of getting support for improved practices in their parent organizations. Help members locate consultant resources available in their communities. Plan with members concerning their needs for further consultation and supervision. ◇◇

THAT CRUCIAL FIRST SESSION

The first meeting of an institute or workshop is a crucial one. But if time has been taken for pre-institute planning, some of the chronic first-session headaches will be alleviated. Members of the group will have had opportunity to gain a better understanding of the goals and content of the program. The leader will be armed with some data about the interests and aspirations of the members.

Nevertheless, the 20 or 25 members of the group who come to the first session of an institute (or the larger number who attend a conference) will bring with them a great variety of needs and expectations. Although there will certainly be some common factors in the group, there will also be as many divergent ones as there are members in the group. In addition to the varied expectations of the members, the leader will have certain expectations of his own. The institution or organization he is representing will have others.

The problem of the first session, therefore, is one of attempting to merge these diverse and sometimes conflicting expectations so that by the end of the session some basic areas of agreement are reached.

It is up to the leader to bring these divergent forces into the open. He must provide a climate which will permit that accommodation of needs and expectations which is so essential at the beginning of any workshop program.

Whether the program is a Great Books or World Politics program, a Red Cross first-aid class, a Bible School, Home Demonstration program, or a two-day

institute on leadership training, certain basic member needs and expectations can always be anticipated. The first time a group meets, the members in it must be given sufficient *security* to overcome the doubts, questions, and anxieties which they bring with them. They must become *involved* and *identified* with the program to the point where they want to continue in it. And they must feel that they are in a situation in which they are *comfortable*, which will be *rewarding*, and to which *they* can *contribute*.

Here are some of the specific needs which, it has been discovered, are shared by almost all group members the first time they are brought together:

1. They want to know who is who.

Who are the other members? Why are they in the program? How do they compare in terms of background, occupation, education, and place in the community?

2. They want to know where they fit in.

Can I keep up my end in the discussion? Will I have to carry the program? Will it be over my head? What do other members have to offer me?

3. They want to know what is expected of them.

How much time will I have to spend on outside work? What is expected of me during the sessions? Can I sit and listen, or must I talk? Am I expected to take part in setting the goals or is this all arranged before the program starts?

4. They want to know what they can expect from the leader.

To what extent will the leader really run the program? Will he share and distribute leadership responsibilities? What can the leader offer to the group in terms of background, knowledge, information, counseling, personal advice, and assistance? What kind of guy is he?

5. They need to understand the goals and the objectives.

What are the real goals of the program? Are they entirely pre-determined or can they be altered? Are there any hidden agendas? What criteria have been set for success in the program? What content and subject matter will be covered?

6. The need to feel at ease.

Since any new situation produces some fears, doubts, and anxieties, the members of the group need to feel

accepted and wanted as soon as possible; they want to feel that they are "part of the group".

7. They need to feel identified with the program.

Members of the group will want to feel that the program has value for them as individuals, that they have a place in it, and that they will miss something important by not being involved in it on a continuing basis.

8. They need to be stimulated mentally.

In addition to personal and emotional acceptance, members of the group should have at least one challenging and stimulating mental experience during the first session. They should not only be talked to about what they will do, but they should also do it.

Now what about the needs and expectations of the leaders? If he is to be helpful to the group, he, also, must know who's who, what he can expect from the members, what their level of interest is, what they expect from the program, and how much they are willing to contribute to it, as well as what are their individual needs, interests, and goals.

With this kind of knowledge—and with insight—the leader can modify his expectations and demands to fit those of the group, and he can establish group rapport —so essential to a good beginning.

to launch your first meeting—

At this point the reader might well say, "This is fine theory, but how can any mere mortal run a session so that these varying needs and expectations are met?" Or, "How on earth can the necessary planning and organization be handled without the leader becoming self-conscious and rattled?"

Obviously, there can be no uniform answer or set procedures for all situations. In the final analysis, the leader or chairman must size up the needs and expectations of the group each time and must plan his meeting accordingly.

Nevertheless, there are certain methods for conducting the first meeting which have been tried and tested in programs with union members, farmers, industrial groups, and volunteers. In the table on page 22 these are listed along with an indication of the particular needs which are met by each of the techniques proposed.

SOME TIPS TO START WITH

WHAT TO DO
(Techniques)

1. As members of group assemble, distribute course outline, bibliography, and sheet for group members to fill in with names, occupations, address, etc.
2. Start meeting with brief welcome, refer to course or program outline, mention goals, tie program in to institution or organization. (Understand that most of this will have to be repeated again.)
3. Have members of group introduce themselves. Structure so that each person knows what is expected. (Write outline on blackboard.) Ask for information not only on name, occupation, etc., but also include one leading question which will require some thought, such as, "Why did you register for this program?" "What do you hope to get out of it?" "What are your major problems or training needs?"

   Have someone keep note of problems or interests so that a list of them can be mimeographed and distributed to group, along with names and addresses, at second meeting.
4. Leader introduces self. Tells about own interests, background, experience, and goals. Describes plans for program, mentions degree to which plans are flexible and changeable, etc. Discusses techniques and methods to be used, kinds of assignments, and work expected from members.
5. Move directly into discussion of question or problem relating to content of program. Take sufficient time to involve as many of the group as possible. Select kind of question (either before session or from problem census) which doesn't threaten anyone and which everyone can pitch in on—i.e., an opinion or an experience, rather than a demand for facts or information. Keep this discussion going for major portion of session.
6. Permit sufficient time to review session, with special emphasis on goals, procedures, what is expected of group, and the like. Make sure that any dangling aspects of physical or mechanical arrangements are settled before group breaks up. Refer back to discussion and point up some aspects or problems which will push thinking beyond point reached during session.
7. Remain around after formal session is completed to deal with questions, problems, and anxieties that individual members wish to discuss with leader privately and personally.

WHY DO IT
(Needs met)

1. Gives group members something to do during difficult moments of waiting. Provides preliminary idea of content and goals. Provides leader with list of members and idea of occupations.
2. Permits group members to get settled. Allows late members to arrive, but still sets pattern of starting on time. Lets members size up situation and people visually before demands are made on them. Leader assumes rightful responsibility for getting the ball rolling.
3. Permits members to size up others in group and to see where they fit in. Demands that they take the step —which otherwise might be long-delayed—of speaking and actually contributing to group. Provides leader with insights into make-up of group, their verbal abilities, their weaknesses and strengths. Provides insight into level of interest and aspiration and kinds of expectations. By collecting and returning list of names and problems, group understands that there will be some return for their contributions and that the procedure has meaning.
4. Gives group an idea of the kind of person leader is, and what to expect from him. Provides opportunity to determine how much accommodation in expectations is required. Lets members know what is expected of them. Gives them an idea of what their place and position in the program is. Gives members more security about the situation in which they will be operating.
5. Fills need for *doing* it rather than talking about doing it. Provides some meat and content. Involves large number in active discussion, identifies them, and makes them feel they have contributed as well as getting something from others. Provides members with example of technique to be used, what is expected of them, and sets pattern for future participation. Stimulates interest, and should challenge ideas and thinking.
6. Gives members feeling of assurance and security which comes from review. Covers important details missed by late-comers. Permits any public questions about program to be answered. At same time, keeps the learning aspect of program open so that members are stimulated to continue thinking between sessions.
7. Some members of group may be too shy or ill at ease to bring up their private problems, fears, or needs in a public manner.

A review of these suggestions for the first session might well raise the question of how these proposals would work with larger groups. Although the proposed procedures must be revised somewhat, the basic elements can be retained no matter what size group.

For example, the preliminary instructions (steps 1 and 2) can be handled with the group as a whole. The leader could then move on directly to step 4 and tell about himself, his interests, and the goals and procedures of the program. At that point the entire group can be divided into sub-groups or buzz-groups. These sub-groups can then handle steps 3 and 5. In other words, the introductions of members and the continuing discussion of a basic question can be handled in the small groups so that everyone will get a chance to participate. If such a procedure is used, it is important to have each group select a discussion leader and a recorder. Some time before the session is finished, the entire group can be called together and the recorders asked to report on the major problems raised in each group or the major outcomes of the discussion. In this way each member in each sub-group will feel that his ideas and contributions are being used, and all will have an opportunity to see how their thinking compared with that of the other groups.

Having set forth these rather detailed suggestions for procedure and content in the first session, it is important to emphasize that these are not suggestions to be adopted blindly. Be sensitive to the reactions of the group and change your approach if it seems sensible to do so. But whatever the procedure, do try to see that these basic needs and expectations of the group members are met. Most important of all, as the leader or chairman, do what comes natural to you. Be yourself. ◇◇

ORGANIZING WORK GROUPS

A CONFERENCE used to be compounded of two mildly antagonistic parts. One part sat stiffly on the platform seats and looked down. The other part fidgeted in the auditorium seats and looked hopefully up. The part on the platform waved its arms, drank water which it personally poured from a pitcher into a glass —and made speeches on what it thought the other part wanted to hear. Or ought to hear. The part down there being harangued was alternately amused, interested, bored.

After a meeting or two, more and more of the audience-part came late, left in the middle, chatted in the corridors, went out to do the town, or got mad and said, "Never again."

Today this platform-dominated conference is yielding to one which more adequately meets the requirements for individual and group achievement. Today's audience is no inert mass. It has its dynamic place in the over-all meeting design—a functioning unity with the planning staff and platform personnel.

This is true whether the primary aim of the conference is for each member to gain some needed information, or whether the primary aim is for the conference as a whole to take some action such as making decisions or producing a report.

Every member of the conference can take an active part in a small work group, contributing his thinking and experience to the whole.

When we try to cope with major problems, such as deciding policy, we quickly realize that we can do a

thorough job only if we divide the work so some conference members can do one part and some another. Even if we have the task of writing a constitution or working out a budget, we can do a much better job if we break down the task into manageable parts and assign the work to small groups. These realities have often led to the appointment of committees, but committees use only a few of the conference members, and there may be a period of months or a year before they report back to the main group.

Still for the moment talking about the conference dealing with major policy problems, it is desirable, of course, to group people with knowledge and experience in a given area. But beyond that, it is important to include some members in each group who have a sympathetic understanding of all the elements, in and out of the organization, which will be affected by the decisions. And it is essential to have members who will be responsible for translating policies and plans into action.

In general, the shorter the work conference, the greater the need for a fairly rigid assignment of people to get the work done. When the conference lasts several days and there is freedom for last-minute choice, then in addition to the work groups, there may be injected simultaneous sessions complete in themselves, such as demonstrations of methods, films, technical information, and the like.

The trend toward pre-conference correspondence between planning staff and participants gives the planners essential information about the people who are going to come to the meetings, and some of the groupings may well be arranged in advance of the conference. But not all groups in a policy-making type of conference should be formed in advance. This is because members may have strong personal interests which would not be revealed by pre-conference correspondence, and which would be violated by arbitrary assignment.

Unforeseen problems are bound to arise during a meeting. Some policy which appeared in advance to be but a small facet for subgroup solution may suddenly become such a burning question that everyone wants in on the act. In this case a general meeting may be in order before any small group can be given authority to deal in any way with the problem.

Now, let's examine "grouping" in the light of the type of conference where new information for the individual is the primary goal.

We often hear the criticism that discussion groups in annual conferences start at the same place each year and cover or uncover the same ground. Some thought to grouping by levels of experience and sophistication will help alleviate this condition, although a common denominator of interests might be considered elemental in forming the small work groups. Perhaps it's a professional interest (they're all librarians, doctors, ministers . . .). A common function within different organizations (salesmen, office managers, file clerks . . .) might form the basis for the breakdowns. Or perhaps volunteer workers see themselves as having problems different from those of the professionals.

Within such areas there will also be a wide gap in knowledge and experience, some people needing elementary help, others wanting the refreshment of new ideas and the opportunity to consider the application of recent research findings—be they in medicine, human relations, or whatnot.

Again there arises the question of when these divisions are to be made.

Where new information is the conference aim it will usually be desirable if people sign up for particular learning groups *before the conference opens.* Pre-conference correspondence tells prospective members what kinds of information and service will be available. In turn, the planning committee finds out about member interests, professional orientation, and to some degree the contributions that can be made.

When groups are set up before the conference, the committee can make practical arrangements for appropriate meetings rooms, plan to have research material and other resources available, make sure that consultants will be on hand, etc. In addition, if participants are committed to particular learning groups ahead of time, they are likely to have a stronger sense of belonging, and to want to stay with the work group of their choice.

The details throughout are less important than the principle that at a work conference groups are set up in whatever ways the members can work on their problems most effectively. ◇◇

USING RESOURCE PEOPLE

Workshop and institute leaders need to know the kinds of resource people who are likely to be most useful. Not everyone has the special skills needed to carry out this function successfully.

Workshop members bring to the group varying backgrounds in education, experience, skills, and insights. Sometimes the workshop is geared to exploration, sometimes to planning and action. In assisting groups to help themselves, resource people, therefore, must be adaptable to a variety of differing groups and situations.

Resource people serve in situations dealing with changes in people and in their ways of doing things. The more that resource people know and understand about people, and the more contacts they have with them, the more effective they will be.

In any given situation, workshop leaders should seek resource people who have had experience with the kinds of problems that face the group members.

Resource people are most helpful when they are open-minded toward new ideas. Even within groups that seem ready for change, some members may resist new ideas. Resource people are most effective in this kind

of situation if they bring to the discussion an attitude that looks upon constructive change as a natural occurrence. Usually this attitude will be found in a person who has himself experimented with new plans and projects. This kind of leadership is based essentially on respect for the ideas of all individuals and on the conviction that progress evolves from differences in viewpoint, from frictions, and from the gradual merging of varying ideas into a newly developed pattern.

Workshop leaders should seek resource people who are skilled in the techniques of human relations, who have a genuine liking for people and a sympathetic understanding of the problems confronting group members.

Have you ever participated in workshop sessions where the resource person was a "star"—a self-styled expert who demands the spotlight? This type of resource person disrupts the natural interaction of the group by his efforts to dominate the scene. Until he meets criticism, he seems but dimly aware of group members. When his ideas are challenged, he goes on the defensive. In the process, there develops a tug-of-war between him and group members, and while the contest rages there is little chance of maintaining an atmosphere that permits an exchange of ideas and opinions.

You may say that even though some "stars" have little to contribute, their use in this leadership capacity is justified because the status of their position will have a favorable effect on the group. But in a workshop situation, function is more important than status. Fortunately, skilled resource people can usually be secured who will participate as co-learners with all other members of the group, and who will help in maintaining an atmosphere in which free and open exchange of ideas is welcomed. Since this type of resource person does not set himself on a pedestal, he does not feel obligated to defend or justify his ideas against criticism or attack. He is objective. He views the group as a stimulant to thinking and to learning.

competencies of resource people

There is a wide range of competencies that resource people can bring to workshops and institutes. Special-

ists can share knowledge of their fields. They can provide ideas and suggestions concerning activities, techniques and materials.

They also have helpful practices to share. For example, experienced directors of adult education can assist newer directors by sharing practices dealing with the organization and use of lay advisory committees, the selection and supervision of teachers, publicity and promotion devices, and record keeping.

Resource people can share unusual experiences at these training sessions. Persons who have been actively engaged in adult education projects abroad or who have visited important adult education centers and leaders in other countries can bring their impressions to groups discussing the adult education movement.

Resource people have skills to share. For example, the resource person who is skilled at role playing can demonstrate this technique for interested groups. Resource people can also help groups to organize successful panel discussions, symposiums, and buzz groups.

Recently teachers of adult education activities were intrigued at a workshop with a demonstration of the numerous ways in which a blackboard can be used. The demonstration was conducted by a resource person experienced in the versatile use of this visual aid. In addition, resource people skilled in the use of such equipment as film, filmstrip, and slide projectors have assisted teachers and administrators in acquiring skill in using this equipment.

Resource people can share research findings. They could, for example, provide directors of adult education with data on school enrollment, drop-outs, characteristics of the more successful programs as well as research findings dealing with the educational needs of the aging and of young adults.

Another concern of the workshop is *when* to use resource people. Groups will be most receptive to the assistance of resource people when they want to explore a subject with all pertinent facts before them, or when they are embarking on new ventures, or planning activities which involve new skills. They will also find this kind of help useful when they want to evaluate their current activities or when they have an important decision to make. ◇◇

POINTS FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. *Listen to the other fellow.*

Sharing problems, experiences, and ideas about how problems can be solved is the very meat of the meeting. To profit by this interchange, the participant must cultivate the art of active listening. Listening is a high form of cooperation and participation. It is particularly important to be non-judgmental in listening to the other fellow's ideas. Nothing threatens people so much as an overcritical judgment of an idea, value, or point of view. Furthermore, the egocentric monologuist is a boor.

2. *Let's not pretend.*

The purpose of the meeting is to solve *real* problems. The participant will be most helpful—and most helped—if he will share his real concerns with the group in an open and frank fashion. To withhold views because someone might disapprove is a real disservice to the group and frustrates the goals of the meeting. Expressing one's real feelings and ideas is not easy. Sometimes the inability to state a problem is related to the self-expectation that everything one states must be tied up in a bright neat package before it can be handed over to the group. Remember that some of the most valuable contributions come from speech which is halting and from minds which are groping to give clarity to thought. That which is glib is usually not profound. And it is the function of the group to help the individual express what he is thinking, and contribute what the group may need most.

3. *Don't let George do it all.*

The function of the participant not only is to contribute ideas. It is his responsibility to help develop the goals of the meeting, to set the limits of the discussion, to help inaugurate procedures which will be effective in problem-solving. If there is a sense, for instance, that the discussion would profit by more illustrations, or a case history, it is the duty of the participant to make this suggestion. An effective group member plays whatever role he feels at the time will help the group.

4. *Don't overvalue "sweetness and light".*

Meeting together helps people share different points of view. If we all thought alike there would be little need

may be a kind of smog which prevents any clarity of vision. Inability to reach solutions frequently comes from the fact that people do not feel free to state openly the issues about which they feel there is conflict.

5. *You may get "shot down".*

In a productive group your ideas are bound to be challenged. One should expect this to be so. Moreover, one's habits of thought may receive some slight jolts, may even be disrupted. Often the process of working together in the solution of common problems means that the individual gives up some way of thinking which was precious to him.

6. *You can change things.*

Since the workshop or institute is organized to help you with problems of concern to you, it is your responsibility to see that there is evaluation of its objectives, methods, and procedures. If you have failed to achieve what you thought should be achieved, and you believe it was because things were not organized properly, you have the responsibility to say so. Groups have functioned at higher levels of accomplishment because someone who was dissatisfied performed the constructive role of initiating evaluation and change.

7. *Remember where it counts.*

Whether the participant is working on a problem which is essentially his own, or whether he is working with a group on a problem of common interest, it is well for him to remember that the solution must be workable in the practical "back-home" situation. It is easy to indulge in fantasy, and sometimes the enthusiasm of the group may carry work far away from the world of reality. The participant needs to keep in mind that the ultimate test of ideas and solutions is whether or not they will work back home.

8. *You can get help if you give it.*

In most workshops and institutes the resources of members and staff are such that the individual or the group can get help. But often help is dependent on the way we present our problems, on the richness or poverty of our information, on the openness or defensiveness of our attitudes. Getting help is a two-way communication process. We have to work hard in clarifying our own communication in order to get the help we need.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

In this article an attempt will be made to spell out some of the devices for social experience in workshops, and to suggest a basic rationale for their contribution. It should be remembered, however, that any one of these devices may be mis-used by persons who have no genuine respect for human personality. If the real purpose of an activity is to enhance the ego of the leader at the expense of the participants, no great good can be expected from it.

If, on the other hand, the leaders and program-planners sincerely respect people and understand their needs, social activities can make an enormous contribution to the sharing of ideas and to group problem-solving.

Name tags are a great help, especially at the start. If tags are large enough to be seen by others without unseemly neck-craning, so much the better. If the participants are seated in a circle, the tags can be creased to enable them to be placed in front of each person. At the beginning of a workshop, however, they will need to be attached to the workshopper to permit easy identification wherever he goes. The goal is to help people to learn names so they need not refer to others as "that lady over there" or "the man who just spoke".

Many workshops open with a coffee hour in which people are registered, furnished with coffee or tea, and introduced to others. There is time for informal conversation, reunions with old friends, and discovery of new ones. This provision of time before the formal

program gets under way can furnish comfort and security to those who feel that they are in a strange place, surrounded by strange people. They are likely to discover that "strangers are just the friends you haven't met yet".

. Eating meals together has long been recognized as a valuable social experience. There appears to be a vigorous socializing effect in partaking of food together. Even timid persons tend to open themselves toward their neighbors at the dinner table. Whether the food is good or bad, the social effects seem to be achieved anyway. There may be importance in relaxing some of the formal dinner arrangements in order to emphasize communication and put people at their ease. For example, the family-type meal where food dishes are passed seems to contribute more effectively to socialization than does the meal that is formally served. Tables which accommodate eight or 10 people are more likely to resolve cliques than are tables for two or four.

Ideally, participants should seek to use the coffee periods and meal times for learning to make new acquaintances. The practice of eating with one's own circle of old friends does not contribute much to the social goals of a workshop. It may, in fact, tend to isolate others and make social barriers higher. On the other hand, no one should be required to open himself to others more rapidly than he can do so with comfort.

The more socialized participants are those less in need of the support of familiar neighbors. It is an obligation of these out-going persons to be sensitive to the social needs of others who may become isolated through their own fear of "butting in" where they fear they may not be wanted. Workshop leaders can enlist this kind of help in advance from experienced work-shoppers.

little Tom Tinker

Group singing is another fine socializer, if it is planned for that purpose. Its effect is to bring people a little closer together through their participation in a common activity. It is possible, of course, for participants to remain in their own shell while singing—or at best to stick out a tentative claw which can be hastily drawn back at the end of a song. Action songs may help these timid participants if they are not made conspicuous or embarrassed by an aggressive leader. A nonsense-round

like "Little Tom Tinker" helps warm a group:

Little Tom Tinker
Sat down on a clinker
Then he began to cry
Ma! Ma!
What a poor feller am I.

As each section of the assembled singers rises from their chairs and "jubilates" on the phrase "Ma! Ma!" a climate of feeling-together can be observed. It is probably based on amusement at ourselves engaged all together in a childish rhythm. Perhaps there is a healthy morale-booster inherent in the process of laughing at ourselves. In any case, the skillful workshop song leader who uses "Little Tom Tinker" or any of dozens of other action songs will observe barriers melting away before his eyes. It is hard to become a stuffed shirt again, immediately after being a part of a whole room full of adults singing and wiggling their fingers at their ears, or arising and re-seating themselves in unison.

It should be noted again that many people cannot be rushed into action-singing. Leaders should be sensitive to the feelings of participants and should avoid forcing them into social activities they resent. Most people can be induced to enter into such activities by gradual steps and will usually reach a stage where they welcome action songs and singing games. The more they resent these socializing experiences the more likely it is that they need them. The more they need them, the more sensitive and skillful must be the leader's approach.

The same caution should be noted with reference to the choice of games at evening recreation periods. Most workshops provide for free time at the end of an evening program, to be devoted to a party with the total-group kind of games. The goal again is to help participants overcome their social barriers by just having fun. Picnics, cook-outs, and camp-fires will help achieve this goal if the setting of the workshop (and the climate!) make such activities possible.

games and dancing

Many workshops are held in a facility where the group must fall back on indoor games. These can make a rich contribution to the reduction of social barriers if they are planned to that end. Some games are spe-

cifically designed to bring people into contact with others whom they did not previously know. Charades, role-playing, and other impromptu acts prepared on the spot by random-chosen groups have this effect. So also do games that call for piecing together pictures, each fragment of which is pinned to a separate individual somewhere in the room. Treasure hunts and introduction games bring people into contact with others.

Dancing may help in the process if it does not bar the uninitiated. Some simple square dances and reels can be learned almost immediately by a group which is lucky enough to have a good teacher. Grand marches can be planned in such a way as to leave participants in a formation suitable for group dances. Again, the leader must be sensitive to the fears and barriers that cause people to desert from dance activities. Any dance or game that engages a few participants amid a large circle of spectators is missing its mark.

Some simple and pleasant circle dances, such as "Ach-Ja" and the "Hokey-pokey", can be performed in a large circle that takes in all the workshoppers. The major goal of helping all participants to reduce their inevitable barriers against others should be kept constantly in mind in selecting social activities.

There should be some open time allowed in the schedule just for talking to others. The workshop process is devised to make it possible for people to learn from others. Much of this sharing goes on in groups, but there is a need also for sharing in greater depth, with one or two other participants. The physical setting should be such as to encourage these conversations.

These informal conversations can be encouraged by certain program devices over and above the mere provision of time. For example, a general session can be briefly broken up into buzz-groups in which each participant tells one thing about himself—an achievement or a newly-discovered device or resource. A spokesman for each small group can then report some of these interesting resources to the general assembly, both orally and in a written list to be reproduced and distributed to all workshoppers. Resource-sharing sessions such as these can help to identify the particular person with whom it might be helpful to converse at the first opportunity. If exhibits of materials are a part of the workshop setting,

time should be allowed to examine them and to chat with those who prepared them.

What is the real purpose of informal activities, such as we have been describing in a workshop? Why should time and space and leadership be provided for them? Why should we eat and sing and dance or play games with others? Why spend time having conversations when we could be listening to an authority?

These questions are usually honest ones and they deserve honest answers. The answers are to be found in the basic nature and purpose of workshops themselves. The workshop is a device for cooperative problem-solving. Not only the definition of a problem, but the resources for its solution place a heavy responsibility on every participant.

In a real sense, every person taking part in a workshop is a resource person for every other person. Every person has had certain unique experiences which have produced in him certain unique qualities. These qualities and experiences represent a resource that should be made available to others who might have similar problems to solve. This resource does not depend for its value on the position of the individual, his income, or the number of college degrees he holds. In a workshop everyone has a contribution to make—if it can be discovered and linked to the needs of others.

What prevents each individual from making his potential contribution?

1. The organization or structure of the workshop may prevent it—if no time or incentive exists for getting well enough acquainted with others to reveal the nature of the problems and resources of each participant.

2. The worship of authority may prevent it—if the whole situation tends to elevate some persons into a halo-role and keep all others passive.

3. The barriers we all build about ourselves may prevent it—if they hold us away from others and, in turn, hold others away from us.

Each of us carries about him an invisible wall by which we hold strangers at a distance, and thus prevent them from discovering our weaknesses, our fears, and our problems. These barriers are a kind of defense which we keep (and strengthen) as long as we feel we need them. As Kelley has pointed out: "We are not all we

would like to be, and consequently not all that we hope others will think we are. We therefore try to cover up our weaknesses by preventing others from seeing too deeply into our real personalities."*

Unfortunately, the very walls we build to hold others away from discovery of our true selves tend to bar us, too, from reaching out, from sharing with others. Two-way communication that reaches deeper than the superficial level depends, first and foremost, on the reduction of the barriers that separate people. The first need is for self-respect and its companion-factor, respect for others. As long as we think of ourselves as needing defense and concealment from others, we cannot contribute much to their thinking. Thus the whole process of communication depends on revelation and commonality to others. This requires getting well acquainted. It means freeing ourselves from our barriers. It means giving and receiving, which is the essence of any cooperative enterprise.

A workshop, then, depends for its success on the sharing of resources for the solution of common problems. Since there is little hope of effective sharing until the barriers that separate us are reduced, and since communication is essentially a social process, a workshop must be dedicated to increasing social intercourse. It has this need in common with any process that depends on sharing. In a real sense, democracy itself depends on the shared use of all our human resources.

Reduction of social barriers, then, becomes serious business in any cooperative enterprise. When we include social expefiences in a workshop, it is not just as fun for those who like to sing or talk or play. We need such things even more crucially when some factor in our personality causes us to reject these informal contacts with others. If we expect to share problems, interests, plans, or resources with others, then we must learn to know these other people well.

We have a phrase "child's play" in our culture. It is supposed to imply great ease or simplicity. Perhaps our greatest need is to return to the direct communication level that children achieve more readily than adults.

*Earl C. Kelley, *The Workshop Way of Learning.* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951. p. 75. ◇◇

BACK-HOME APPLICATION

Joe Thomas, a worker in a factory, was sent by his local union to a two-day institute for training instructors. He was given an instructor's manual for running a stewards' training course and, with eight others, was shown how to use this guide. A month later he returned for two more days of training. In the meantime he had done a little homework, and planned to conduct a stewards' training course in his local union when he returned from his own second stint of training.

One of the people who trained him to be a union stewards' instructor drove over and sat in on the first two sessions Joe conducted in his local. Joe was good—better in the second session than in the first, as he got the strangeness and shakiness out of the way. He handled the instructor's manual like a professional—leaned on it when necessary and adapted the material smoothly to the problems of the group.

As the second session ended, Joe's instructor, leaning back with a smile of satisfaction, was greeted by one of the older stewards in the group. After praising the program and how it fitted his needs, the steward said, "I've got to hand it to Joe. I don't know how he does it—*when he can't even read!*"

Joe had delivered on the training he had received, despite what might have been a serious handicap—that he couldn't read. At the first instructor's training institute he had ingeniously side-stepped reading aloud, kept his eyes open and his memory sharp. Back home, a devoted daughter who read aloud to him was all he needed for boning up. He had handled the reading problem in his own way. But beyond that, his success was based on a program that was designed to meet that little old problem that lurks in the minds of many education leaders even as they sit back exhausted but happy over the apparent success of a workshop they have just led: why is it so often those attending a workshop or training institute find it difficult or impossible to carry back into

their home situation the training they have received?

It's a harrassing question. But face the question we must. The real justification for the work put into planning and programing an institute is the participants' ability to translate learning experiences into action in the field back home.

There are reasons why back-home application is often difficult or impossible. Here are a few culled from sad experience—and from some successes:

1. Those who take part in the sessions are not qualified or ready for the training.
2. The training dealt inadequately with back-home needs.
3. Although he has acquired new ideas, the participant doesn't know how or where to start.
4. There is no "niche" in the organizational structure for him to fit into, in order to work on the problem for which he has received training.
5. The participant was sent, or came, just for the sake of "taking part" in the workshop or institute itself.

The work of maximizing back-home application starts much earlier than during the workshop itself. The degree to which back-home action will take place often depends heavily on what is done during the planning and recruiting stage.

In planning education institutes and workshops for union groups we have found it a good policy to involve in the initial planning and staffing of the sessions a responsible person who is in a position, geographically and organizationally, to do follow-up and guidance of institute participants in their home situations. This may be a staff person within the organization. Or it may be a local leader who has had some experience in planning programs similar to those in which institute participants will be taking part.

A few years ago, I helped run three similar training institutes for local union members in different parts of the same mid-western state. One of the institutes produced much better back-home results than the others. This was because in the early planning stages I had a long talk with John Harris, the union field representative in that area. We sat and talked over the specific needs and problems of the people he knew even better than I

did. Finding him eager to take part, we involved him in the actual program of the institute.

Over lunch and in the evening bull sessions, as well as in his workshop sessions, he could talk with the "students" about the specific problems they shared. They could learn from him what they could learn from none of the rest of us on the institute staff. Moreover, they now had a closer relationship with someone who would be nearby if they needed help over the rough spots back home.

recruiting the "right" people

The recruiting publicity for training institutes and workshops should be specific. It should state what the training is for, what the participants will do at the workshop, and what they then will be able to do when they get back home. The best kind of recruiting publicity is that which is followed up on a person-to-person basis between someone on the planning staff of the institute, and the person or persons within the organization who will be responsible for selecting the members who will take part. The more clearly the organization understands why its people are going and how they can be used afterwards, the more effective will be back-home applications of the institute's learning experience.

Joe Thomas was the "right" person to send to a training institute because he had the intelligence, *was willing to put in the time back home,* and was respected by his group. He had attended sessions that were tailored to get him into motion when he returned. Methods were devised to help bridge the gap between the training setting and the real situation he would face.

Generally, the training situation should accomplish the following to insure back-home application:

1. Help give some insight into the problems to be handled and the job which needs to be done.
2. Build confidence . . . develop skill.
3. Help construct a practical plan of action for back-home use.
4. Give some understanding of how to get started and how to carry through.

try a live project

There are various methods and aids which can be

used at workshops and training institutes to help participants gain insights, build confidence, and develop skills.

A few years ago I ran into Harry Collins in a midwest town. As chairman of his local union's Farmer-Labor Committee, he had been doing a bang-up job with farmers and industrial workers in creating mutual understanding of their needs and problems.

Over coffee he told me about one of the things which had helped him considerably. At a workshop on farmer-labor problems he had an assignment to "go out to the farms near the site of the institute, get acquainted with the farmers, and ask them to come to a meeting on the problems of farmers and workers".

He did this, got to know three of the neighboring farmers, heard their views about politics, farm price supports, farm economy, and was shown around their fields and barns while they talked. When he returned to the workshop he and the other members of his group discussed their experiences, relating them to the problems they faced in this area back home.

Harry developed more insight this way into his own role as chairman of a newly formed farmer-labor committee in his own local union. He got some practice—with the added advantage of group analysis of his experiences—in meeting some of the problems he would face. Incidentally, he told me that a large number of the farmers invited to the farmer-labor forum came and had a stimulating time.

This method may not always be feasible. But it is probably more often available than we may think. Short of active participation in a live project, *observation* of people in action in roles for which the participants are being trained can often be incorporated into the training setting. A training institute for adult program leaders, for example, can very often be tied into observation of an adult program in action in the community where the institute is being held.

role playing

Role playing has become one of the standard operating procedures of training sessions. It has been discussed frequently in other issues of this magazine, and readers know how effectively it can be used to help participants "live through" a problem.*

At the end of a role-playing scene of a union steward discussing a grievance with his foreman, a newly elected shop steward came up to me and said, "If I didn't know it was Bill I'd think it was my own foreman. I've got a grievance like that coming up tomorrow and now I think I know how to handle it."

Similarly, demonstrations and movies depicting the job to be done or situations to be faced, help trainees to "see what it's like". Frequently a film which does not cover the identical problems of workshop participants can be translated, through discussion before and after the showing, to apply to their back-home situation.

Often we've heard former institute participants tell us several months later, with apologetic tones, that they have not put to use what they learned although they got a lot out of the institute. Digging deeper, we often find that they did not have the confidence to step out and give it a whirl.

Successfully carrying out responsibility while at the institute will give the individual more confidence, motivate him to get more out of the training itself and—most important—help him get into motion back home. (And once he has started on his own, he is set for the best learning experience of all!)

In one workshop for education-committee chairmen, part of the group was given the responsibility for planning and conducting a recreation and social hour following each session. Another part of the group previewed a film and put on a demonstration film program. Mrs. Hancock, who was on the film sub-committee, went home and put some life into her education group since she had found that there wasn't any magic to planning and running a film program, but just some advance preparation and thinking-through.

practicing on the group

More and more, adult education is involved in training the volunteer group leader. Many training institutes are run for this purpose. Voluntary teachers and discussion leaders, like Joe Thomas, are multiplying the amount of adult education going on.

But unlike the public school teacher who has had practice-teaching as part of his formal training, Joe

*See LEADERSHIP PAMPHLET #6, *How to Use Role Playing.*

hasn't the time for extensive training, nor has he a ready-made group on which to practice.

The training institute itself, then, is the only logical place for voluntary group and discussion leaders to get some practice. This can be done by each person taking a turn at teaching the other members of the training group who "act" as the group back home. This way, members learn from watching and analyzing each other's performance in a secure atmosphere.

A teaching manual, tailored to the material to be discussed, is a handy and valuable guide. A short demonstration of teaching techniques backed up by some pointers on discussion-leadership, a review of the material in the manual . . . and the trainees can swing into practice assignments in leadership.

a program of action for home

Many apparently wonderful program ideas never get hatched from the cocoon of the workshop because the participant, once he gets home, doesn't know how to get started, how to handle some of the small, practical problems he will meet in the early stages of getting a program underway.

One of the last sessions at a workshop or training institute might well be devoted to a discussion within small groups of how to face the real problems back home. Where do you get members for the new committee you need? How do you raise the money for the safety drive in your organization? Where will you get a speaker on social security? How do you go about renting a film on mental health? How do you get your organization to approve a new project?

After a participant goes home, he is usually pretty much on his own. But his home situation doesn't stand still. New problems arise; the situations he faces change constantly. The training period was a concentrated and valuable dose of learning. But what is done after the training phase is often much more important than what is done within the training setting.

One program that is bringing women leaders together for a four-day training institute has scheduled a four-day follow-up institute to be held six months later. Follow-up conferences such as this allow time for the learning to "sink in". Also, application of learning

has started, and the practical problems in the home situation are much clearer. When participants get together for a follow-up institute and share experiences, they find that some of the problems they have faced are not unique. It is instructive to hear how others may have worked them out. It is often worth cutting the time of the first institute to be able to have a follow-up one.

When Joe Thomas went back for his second training session, the stomach butterflies had settled. Some of the cobwebs had disappeared. Now that he had put part of the training to a back-home test, he had a better idea of the problems to be faced.

on-the-spot guidance

John Harris, a staff representative who had been involved in the planning and staffing of one of our mid-western institutes, kept up personal contacts with the participants in his area. He was able to boost the morale of one, help another over a hurdle of a difficult human relations problem that was bogging down a committee, act as a sounding board for still another who needed a knowledgeable listener with whom to test some ideas, and help still another who had got off base in planning a grandiose program that was full of practical pitfalls.

John's getting together with the folks from his area who had attended the institute, paid off in the greater success of their programs.

We *can* take steps to insure back home application of learning. Although Joe Thomas may have surprised some of the people in his local union, his success as an instructor of their stewards' classes didn't just happen. The training sessions he attended were part of a well-thought-out program to help with his success. The program had provided for definite measures to get the right persons to the training institutes. The institutes themselves had incorporated methods to build their confidence and skill, give them insight into the job they were to take on in their local unions. Joe Thomas was followed up in his home situation.

He may not have been able to read. But who knows —Joe might even be tackling *that* problem by now!

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EVALUATION

Everybody knows what evaluation is. It is the mark Junior brings home on his (or her!) report card at the end of the year. It is the hearty opinion of banquet table associates given at the end of a speech: "Very good. I liked what you said a lot."

But evaluation is more than this.

Evaluation is what Junior has to say about his teacher, what all the juniors together have to say about the teacher, and what the parents have to say about both Junior and the teacher.

It is what the folks say to each other about the speaker as they leave the banquet hall and what he has to say about himself when he reports on the meeting to his wife (or she reports to her husband).

It is what people write down on questionnaires at the conclusion of a workshop or institute and it is how they behave three months, six months, or a year later.

Evaluation is thus commonly thought of as an appraisal by both leaders and participants at the end of an activity. Sometimes this final appraisal is immediate; sometimes it is deliberately delayed for months. Sometimes the appraisal is spontaneous and random, sometimes the conditions under which an evaluation is made are highly organized and participation in the evaluation process is widespread.

Now, what kind of evaluation makes sense—and what does not—for workshops and institutes?

First of all, it seems to make sense to take time out for evaluation at several points *during* the workshop or institute—not always waiting until the end when sometimes little can be done about it.

Take, for example, Junior's report card. He was probably "graded" at least five times before his year-end mark was finally recorded to follow him through life on photostatic transcripts. Each successive evaluation period was opportunity knocking once again.

Transferring this concept to the workshop or institute means that opportunities for improvement of learning conditions are repeatedly available if evaluation is seen as a more or less continuous activity.

Second, it seems to make sense for *all* participants in the workshop or institute to have an opportunity to have their say.

Take, for example, the appraisal of the banquet speaker. Naive indeed is the speaker who believes that the spoken comments of his friends at the head table represent the opinion of everybody who heard him. Equally naive is the workshop director who thinks that the words of praise bestowed on him at the close . . . but need we say more?

Third, it seems sensible to provide for the prompt reporting back of evaluation information.

Consider the meeting of the workshop staff. The faculty members review their efforts to date. They go over the evaluation sheets filled out periodically by the workshop participants—and they keep to themselves their conclusions and findings. They reason that if the returns are "good", then it is in poor taste to brag. If the overall reaction is "poor", then the leaders resolve that they will do better tomorrow.

But under these conditions the workshop participants have no opportunity to make improvements in *their* pattern of working, and participants can have their off days and their good days just as leaders can. Reporting back evaluation information spreads responsibility and rewards to both leaders and participants and makes for greater teamwork in the training program.

Fourth, it makes sense if the evaluation data is *discussed* as well as reported.

For example:

Workshop leader: At our faculty meeting last night we reviewed the evaluation information given on the questionnaires you filled out, and decided that our institute leaders have failed to get across the purpose of our so-called "diagnostic" groups.

Workshop participants: (No sound from any of them; it is too early in the morning.)

Workshop leader: We also reviewed your suggestions for next things to do and decided we would have a panel presentation from the three workgroups at our

final session.

Workshop participants: (It is still too early.)

Workshop leader: I take it that silence means consent, so after the coffee break we will reconvene in our regular workshop groups.

Workshop participant I: Just a minute! I was one of those who said I thought the diagnostic groups were punk—but that doesn't mean I didn't understand their purpose. Quite the contrary, I understood it so well I—

Workshop participant II: I'm sure I'm a minority voice, but I don't think reports from workgroups ever fulfill their mission. Can't we talk a bit about how the need can be met without—

All those whose reactions and opinions go to make up the evaluation data should share in its interpretation.

something must happen

Fifth, it makes a lot of sense if some concrete, positive action grows out of all the talk.

Consider the discussion reported immediately above. Can't you predict the consequences if the workshop leader says, "Thanks for your suggestions. We will hand them to the dean so he may have them in mind in planning next year's conference."

Or, because of a different notion about evaluation, the workshop leaders say, "Let's replan our final session to take advantage of your suggestions."

Sixth, evaluation—like anything else—can be run into the ground. As ridiculous as the situation in which no evaluation is done, is the one in which pulse-feeling is a preoccupation. But care should always be taken to differentiate between an over-emphasis on evaluation and a resistance to evaluation that grows from the participants' not knowing why it is done or not seeing any change as a result of it.

A restatement of the sixth generalization may be, then, that it always makes good sense to see that participants in an evaluation program understand its purposes and are able to take part in working out ways and means whereby its objectives may be met.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For sample questions to ask on evaluation forms, see the article, "Evaluating Your Program", in *Adult Leadership* Vol. I, 11 (April, 1953). ◇◇

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